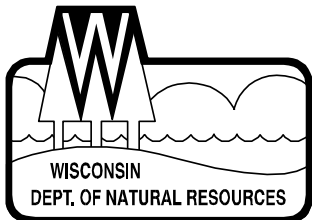


Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources 2008-2009 Snowmobile Enforcement & Safety Report



**Produced by the Bureau of Law
Enforcement, Recreation Enforcement
and Education Section
PUB-LE-203 2009**



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2008-2009 Snowmobile Program Report Summary Recreation Enforcement and Education Section

The 2008-2009 Snowmobile Program Report was compiled from the 23 fatal investigations and other data collected during the fiscal year (a fiscal year runs from July 1 - June 30). The fatality total was two less than the 2007-2008 fatality total of 25. Fatalities decreased despite having another great snow year. The only additional safety measure implemented during recent years was the nighttime, 55 m.p.h. speed limit which was supported by the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs and the Governor's Snowmobile Recreation Council. Fatality rates have continued to decrease since the speed limit was enacted in 2006. Volunteer snowmobile safety instructors certified 8,985 students; the largest number of students certified since the 2001 – 2002 season when 14,588 students were certified when Snowmobile Safety Education became mandatory.

Conservation Wardens are required to investigate all snowmobile fatalities; Wisconsin law also requires that a conservation warden or law enforcement officer be notified immediately of any snowmobile incident that results in an injury requiring medical treatment by a physician. In addition, the operator(s) involved in these reportable incidents must file a written report with the Department of Natural Resources within 10 days.

Factors

Alcohol, speed and nighttime operation continue to be the main contributing factors involved in fatal snowmobile incidents with (10) 44% during the 2008-2009 season. 70% of the incidents were alcohol involved. Speed was also involved in 70% of the incidents and 70% of the incidents occurred during the hours of darkness. The number of operators arrested for operating a snowmobile while intoxicated (43) was down from the 75 during the 2007-2008 season.

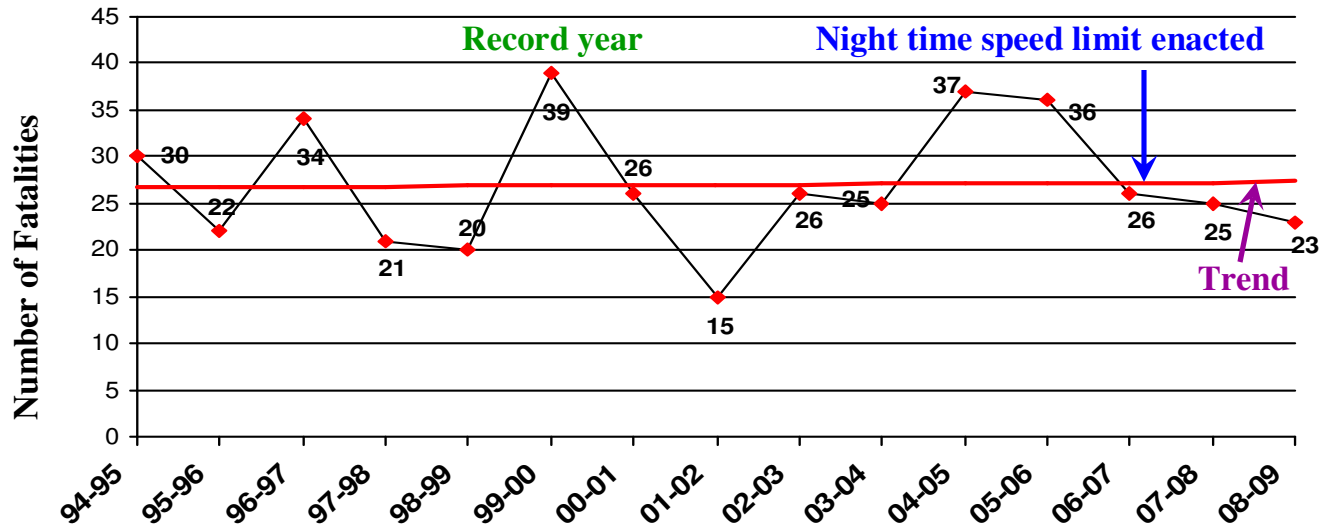
The two top locations where fatal incidents occurred were public trails (48%), followed by frozen water ways (26%). Top two causes for the fatal incidents included: collision with a fixed object (14) 60%, and collision with another snowmobile (5) 22%.

Safety Tips

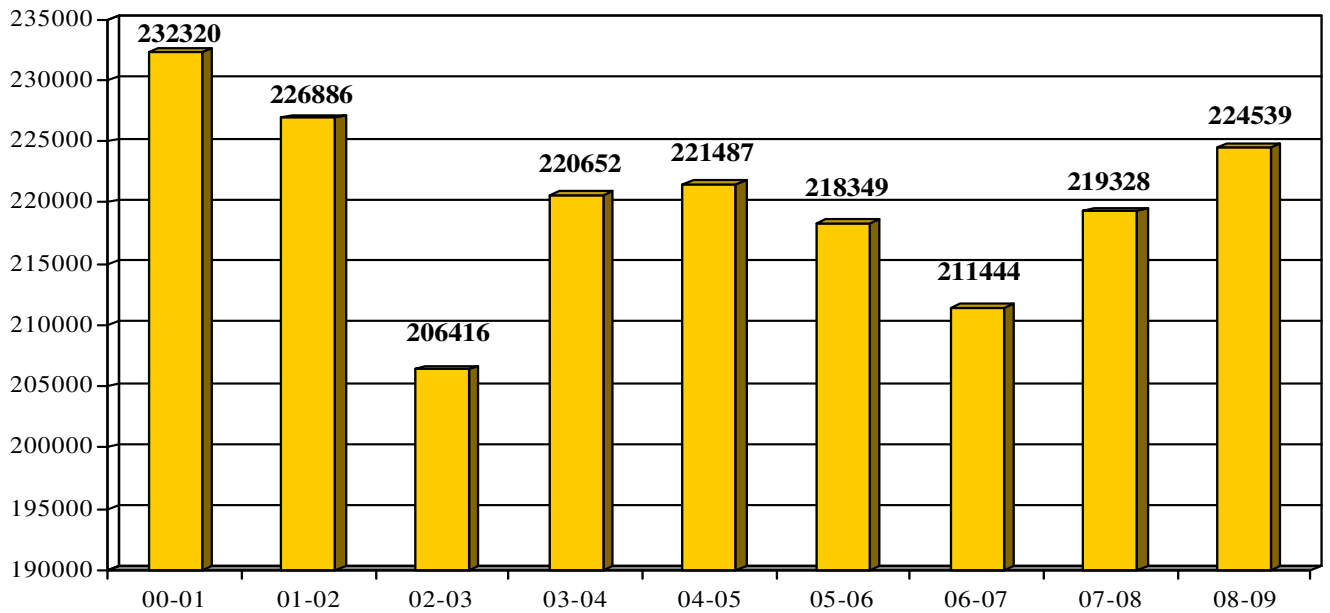
The Department recommends the following tips to help ensure safe, enjoyable and ethical snowmobile experience for everyone.

- Complete a Wisconsin Snowmobile Safety Course. This course helps establish a safety mindset and provides basic knowledge in safe, legal and ethical operation. Visit: www.dnr.wi.gov to find a course near you.
- When crossing roads, always take your safety into your own hands. Never allow someone to wave you across. Cross only when you have determined it is safe to do so.
- Use the highest degree of caution while traveling across frozen waterways. Check ice conditions with local law enforcement or bait shops, carry or wear a flotation device, limit travel at night and if you DON'T KNOW, DON'T GO.
- Use the buddy system, never ride alone.
- Don't drink and ride. Alcohol affects a person's reaction time and judgment. Wait until you're done riding for the day before consuming any alcoholic beverages. If not for yourself, do it for your family and friends.
- Slow down. High speed operation leaves little room for mistakes and greatly increases stopping distances. Many snowmobile fatalities could have been prevented if the operators were only going slower.
- Nighttime speeds above 40 m.p.h. cause operators to override their headlamps. At this speed, operators have little chance of avoiding a hazard once it is illuminated by their headlamps.
- When riding in groups, always maintain a safe following distance of 2-3 seconds. Increase your following distance when traveling at night or when experiencing snow dust.
- Respect private property. The majority of the snowmobile trails in Wisconsin are on private property. Snowmobile clubs invest much time and effort to set up agreements with landowners each year. Riding outside the marked trails on private property is trespass and has caused landowners to close their properties to trails, sometimes forever. Stay within the marked trails and don't cut corners.

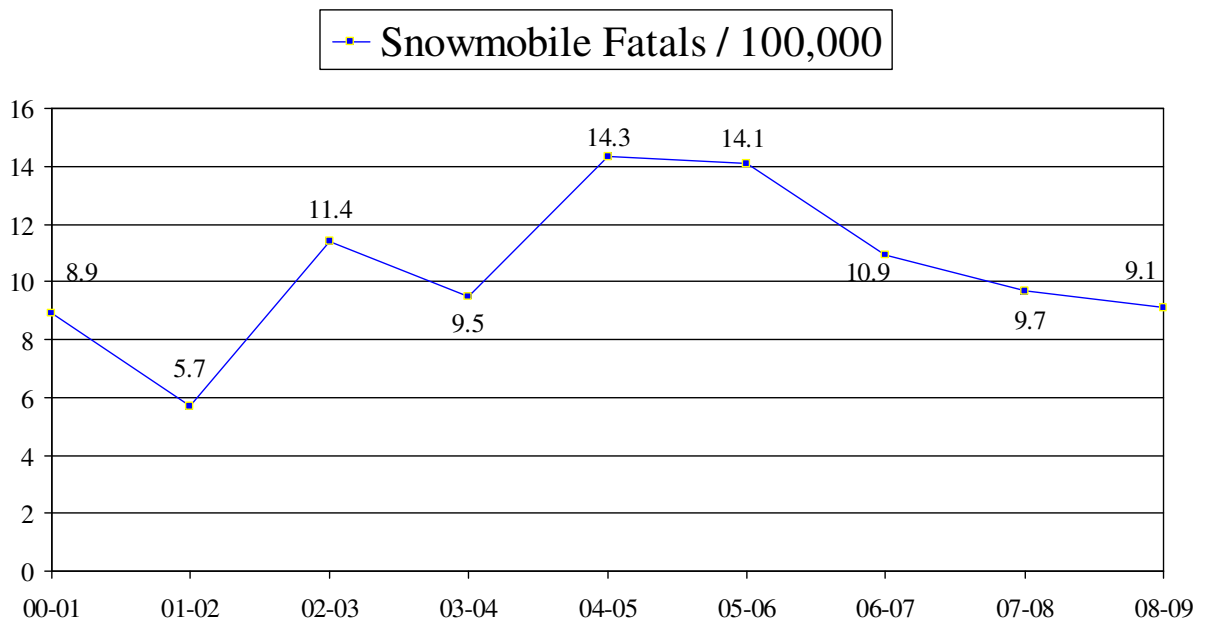
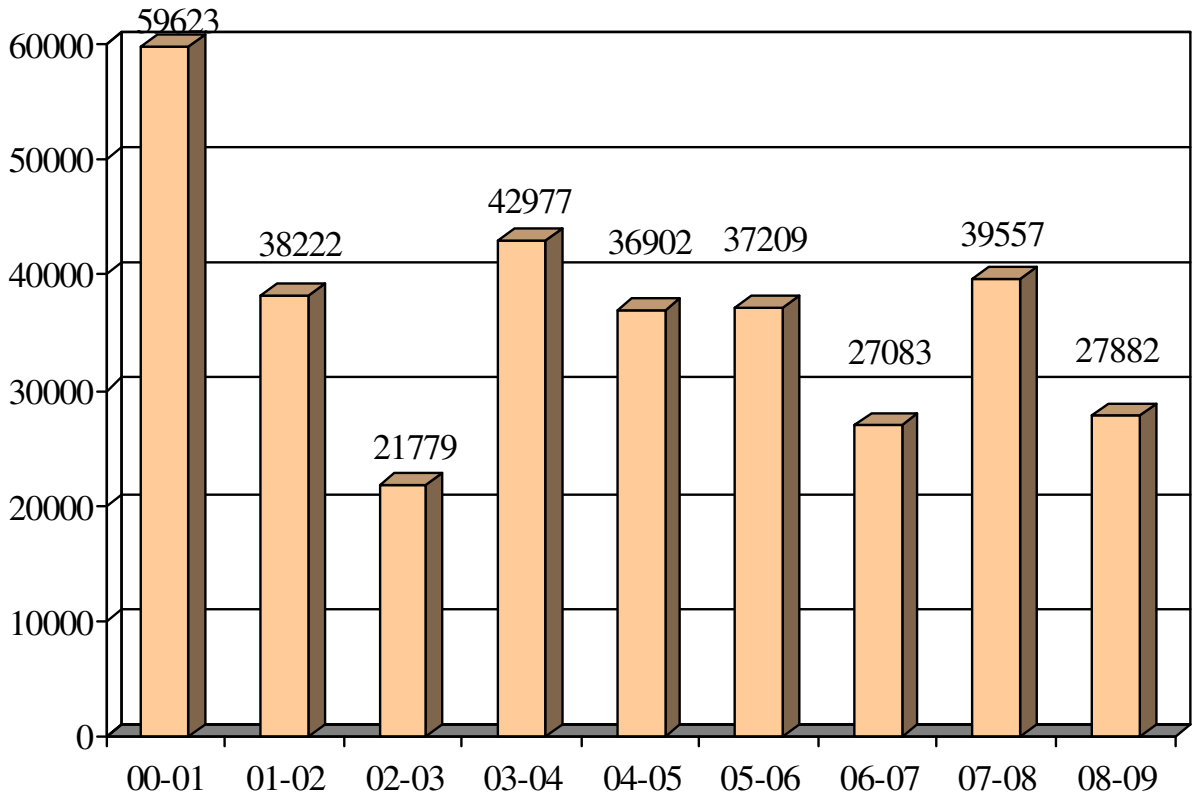
History of Snowmobile Fatalities



Wisconsin Resident Snowmobile Registrations

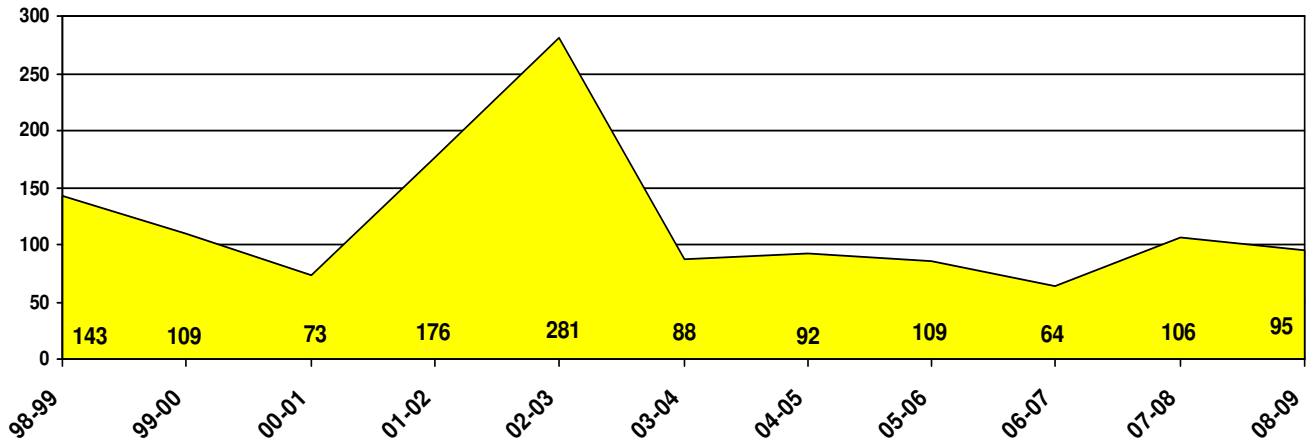


Nonresident Snowmobile Trail Passes



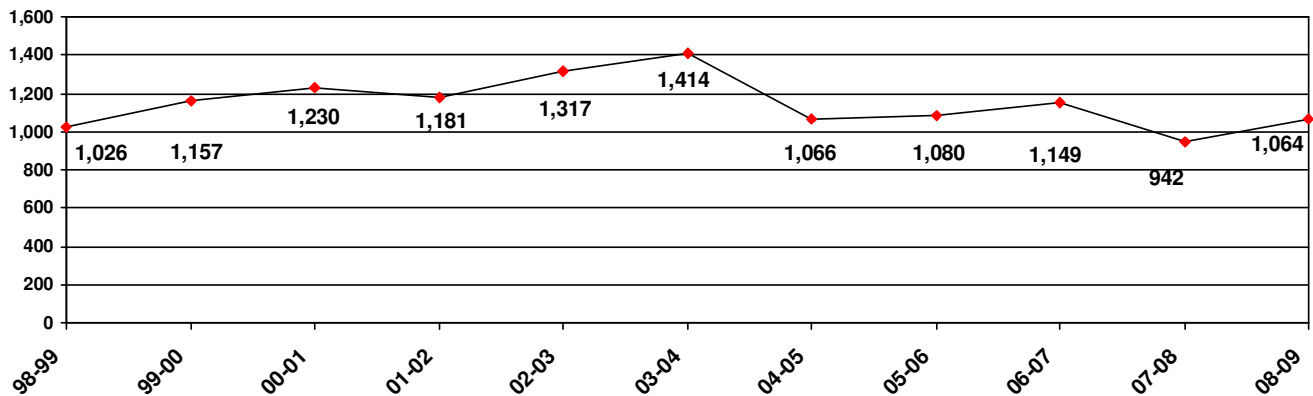
History of Newly Recruited Snowmobile Education Instructors

The total number of active instructors for 2008-2009 was 1,037.



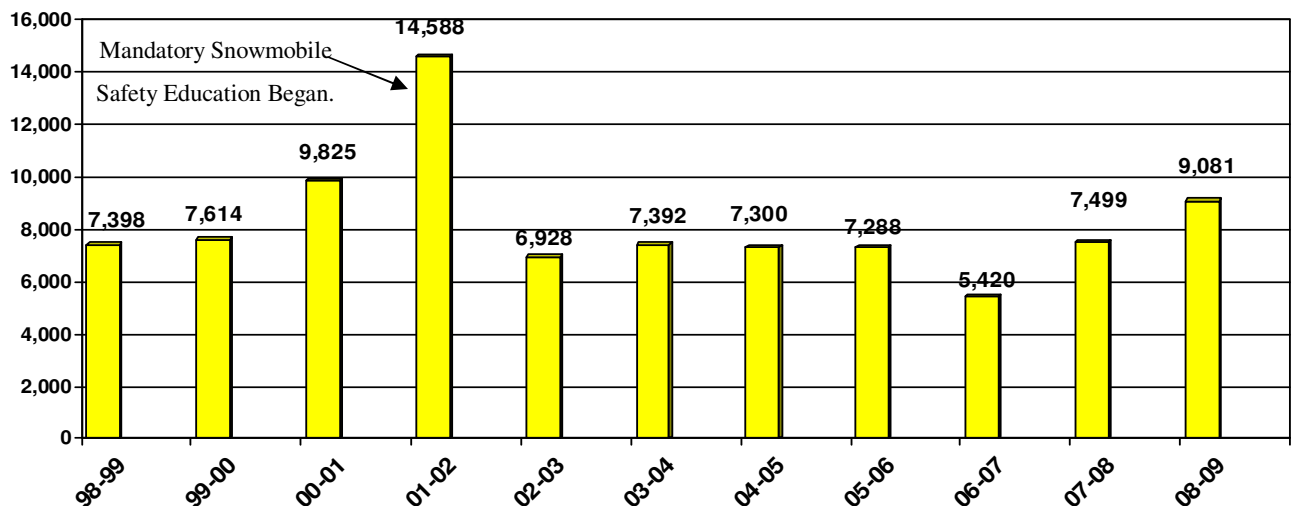
History of Active Snowmobile Instructors

Over 269,409 students have been certified by volunteer instructors.



History of Certified Snowmobile Students

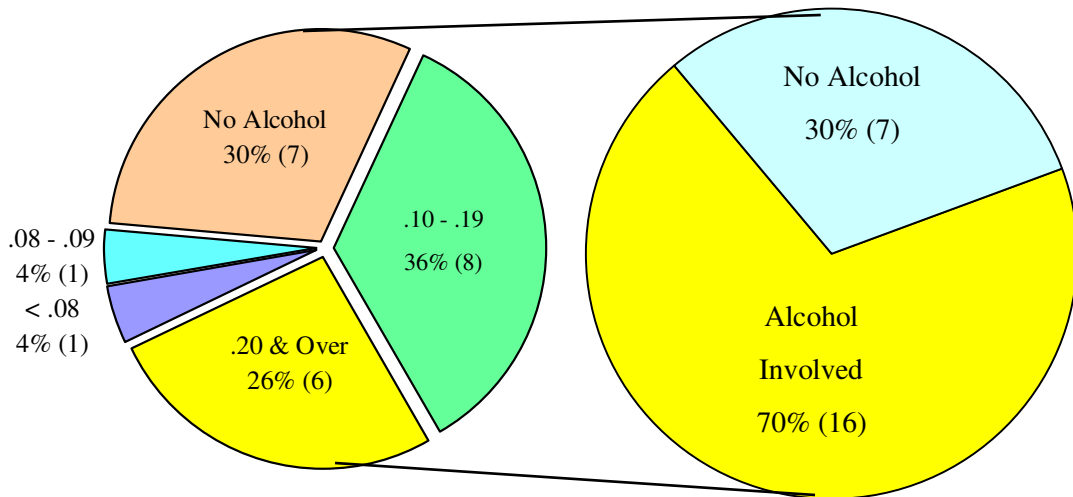
Certification requires a student to complete a basic Wisconsin snowmobile training course. Course content includes: knowing your snowmobile, maintenance and repair, riding, personal safety, winter survival, laws, courtesy and ethics.



2008-2009 Alcohol Involved Snowmobile Fatafs

2008-2009, the average blood alcohol level for all victim operators was 0.201.

A snowmobile fatal is considered "alcohol involved" if any level of alcohol is found in the victims blood or witness accounts confirm the victim was consuming alcohol just prior to the crash.



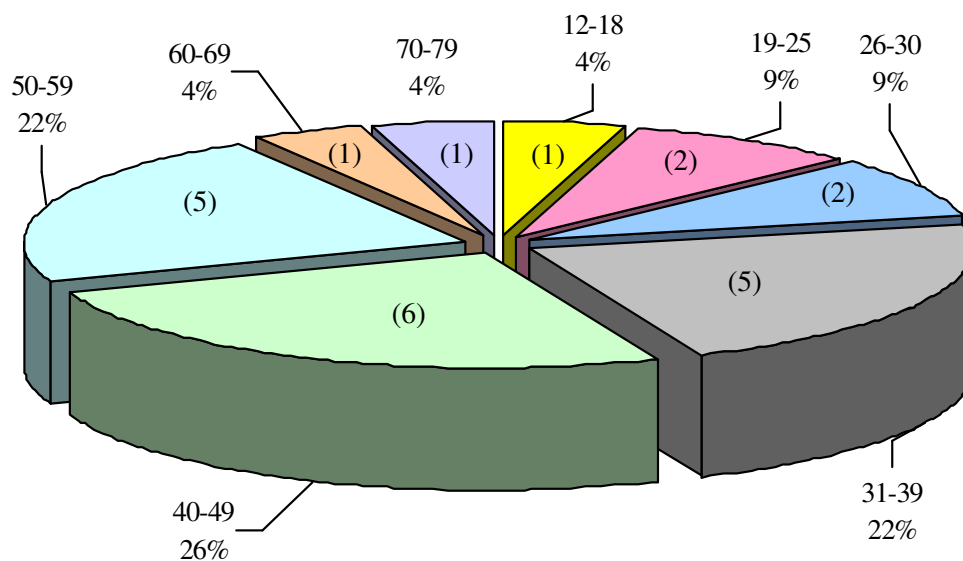
- Numbers in () represents number of victims.

- Blood alcohol content is grams/ml.

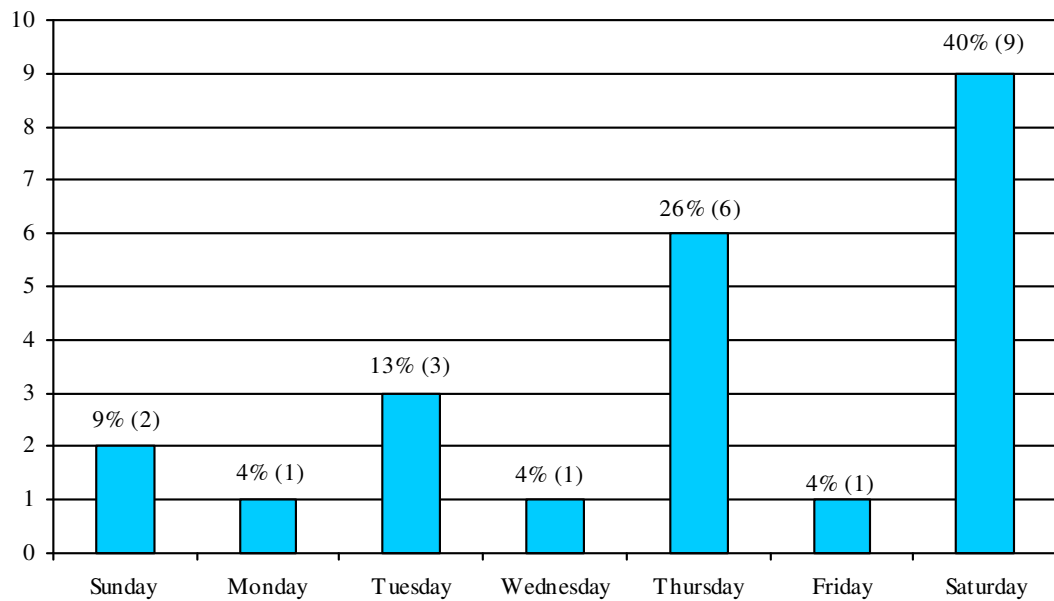
2008-2009 Age of Snowmobile Fatality Victims

The 2008-2009 season showed that alcohol was a contributing factor in 70% of all fatalities.

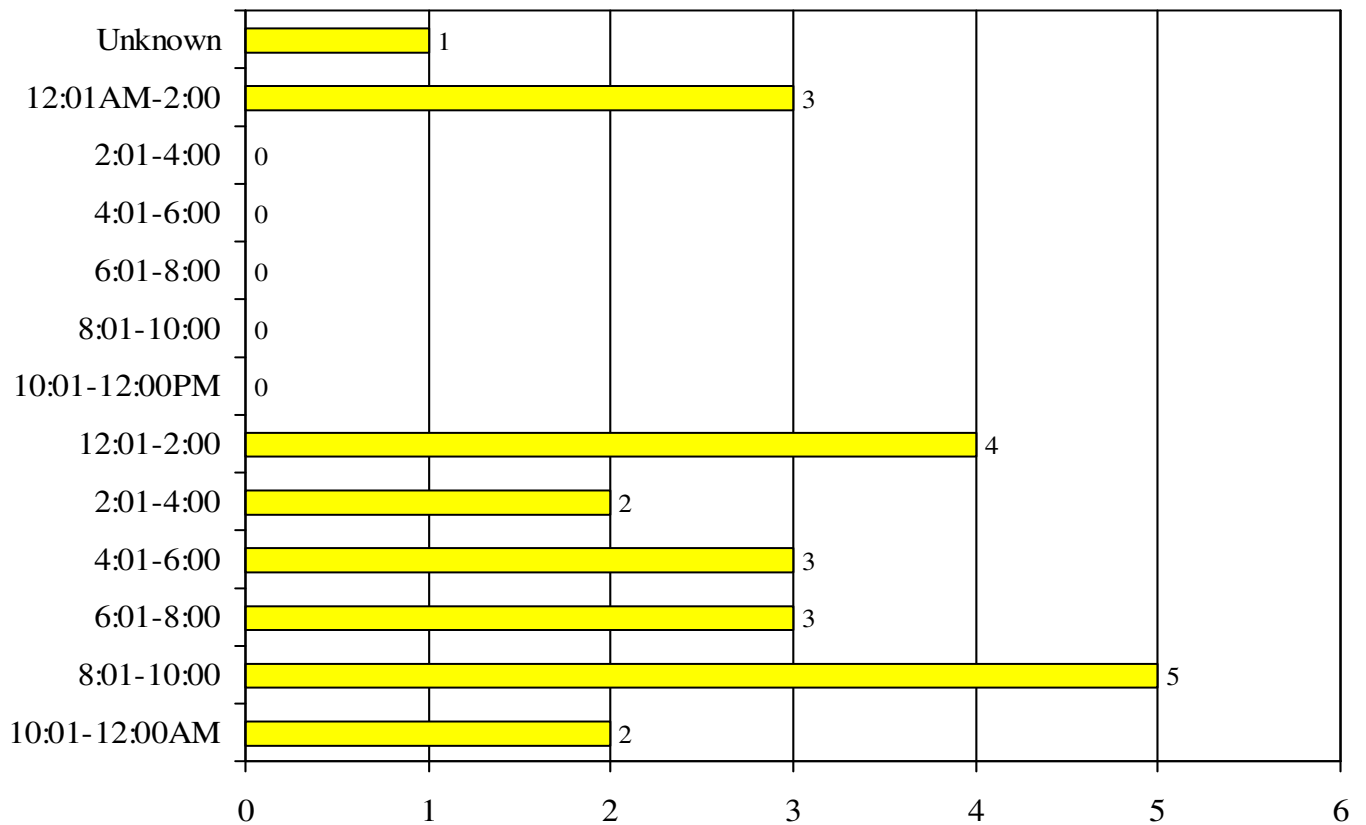
The average age for the victims killed was 42 years old compared to 34 years in 2007-2008.



2008-2009 Snowmobile Fatal Incidents by Day of Week

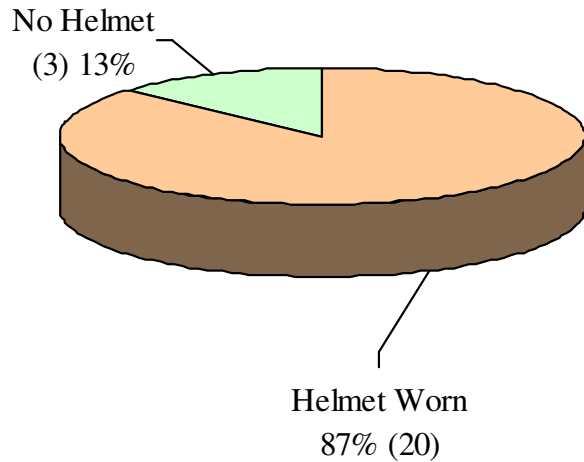


2008-2008 Snowmobile Fatal Incident by Time of Day

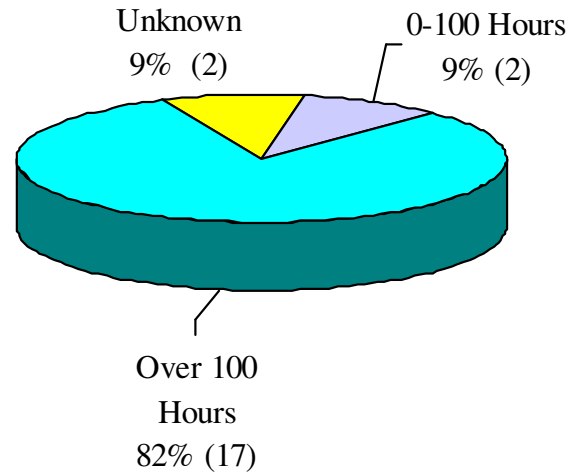


2008-2009 Fatal Snowmobile

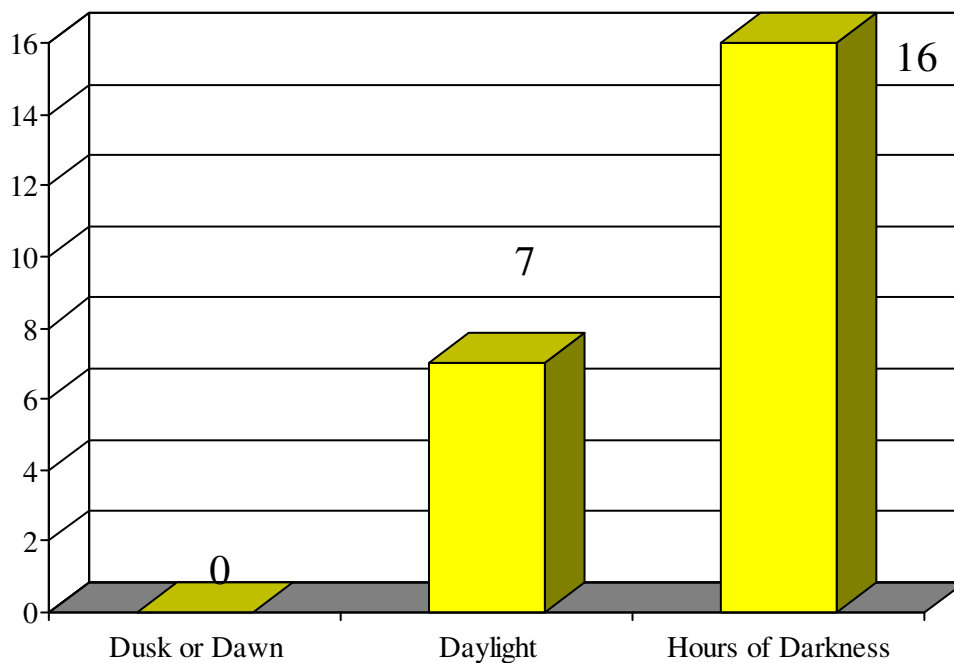
Victim Helmet Use



Operator Experience

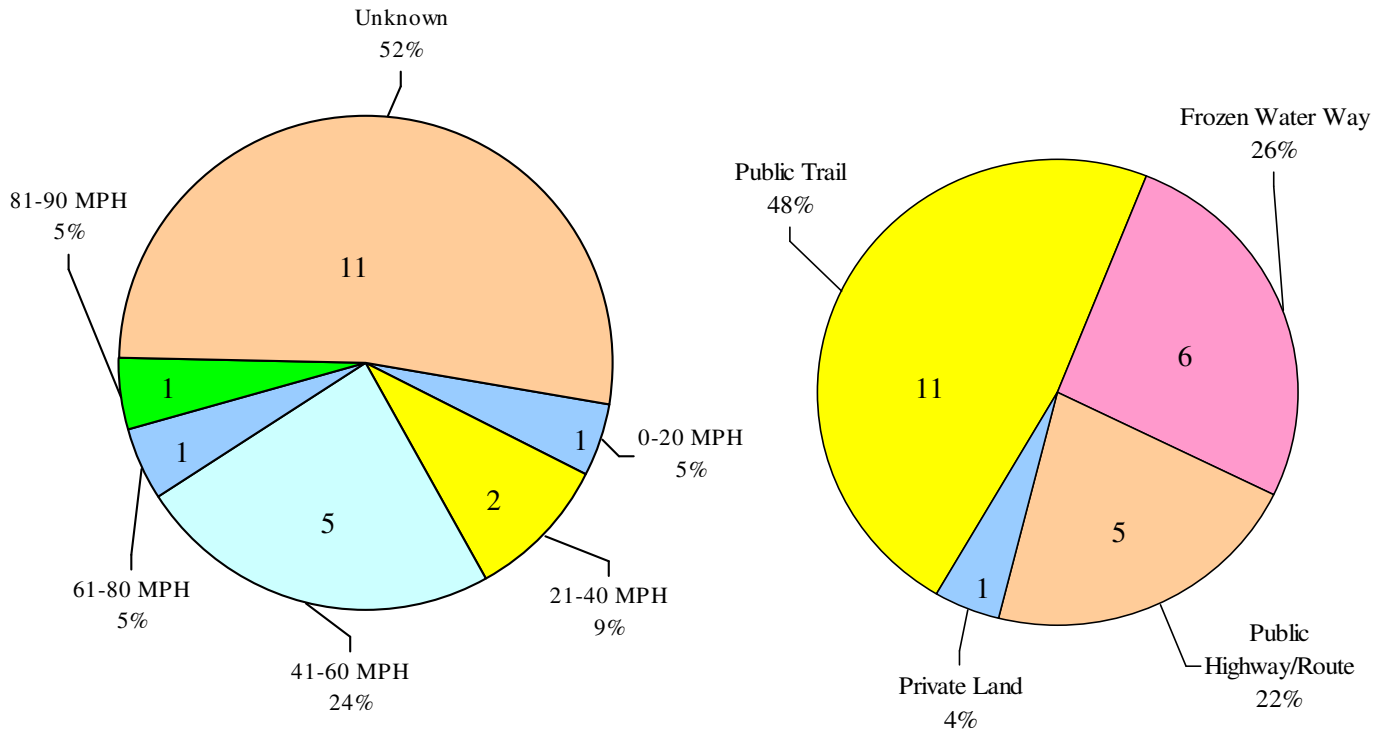


2008-2009 Fatal Snowmobile Incidents Occurring After the Hours of Darkness

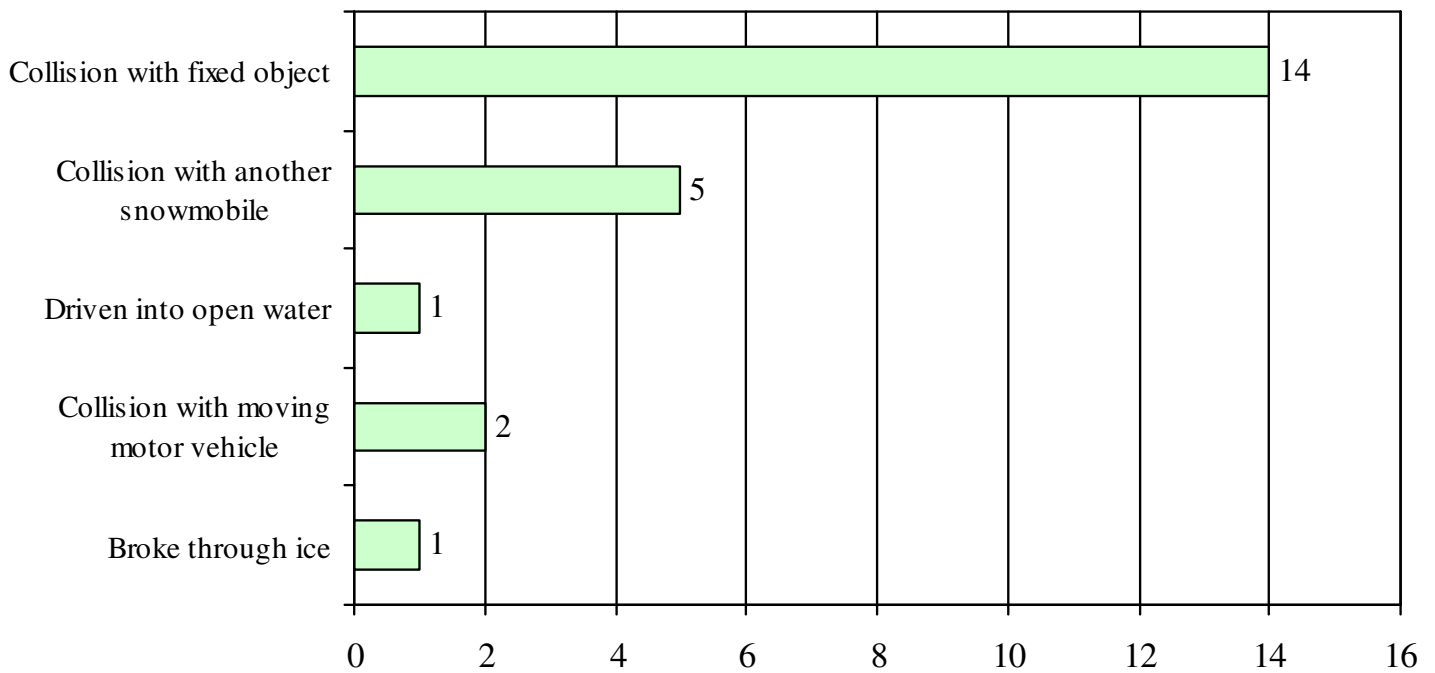


Hours of Darkness refers to the ½ hour after sunset until ½ hour before sunrise.

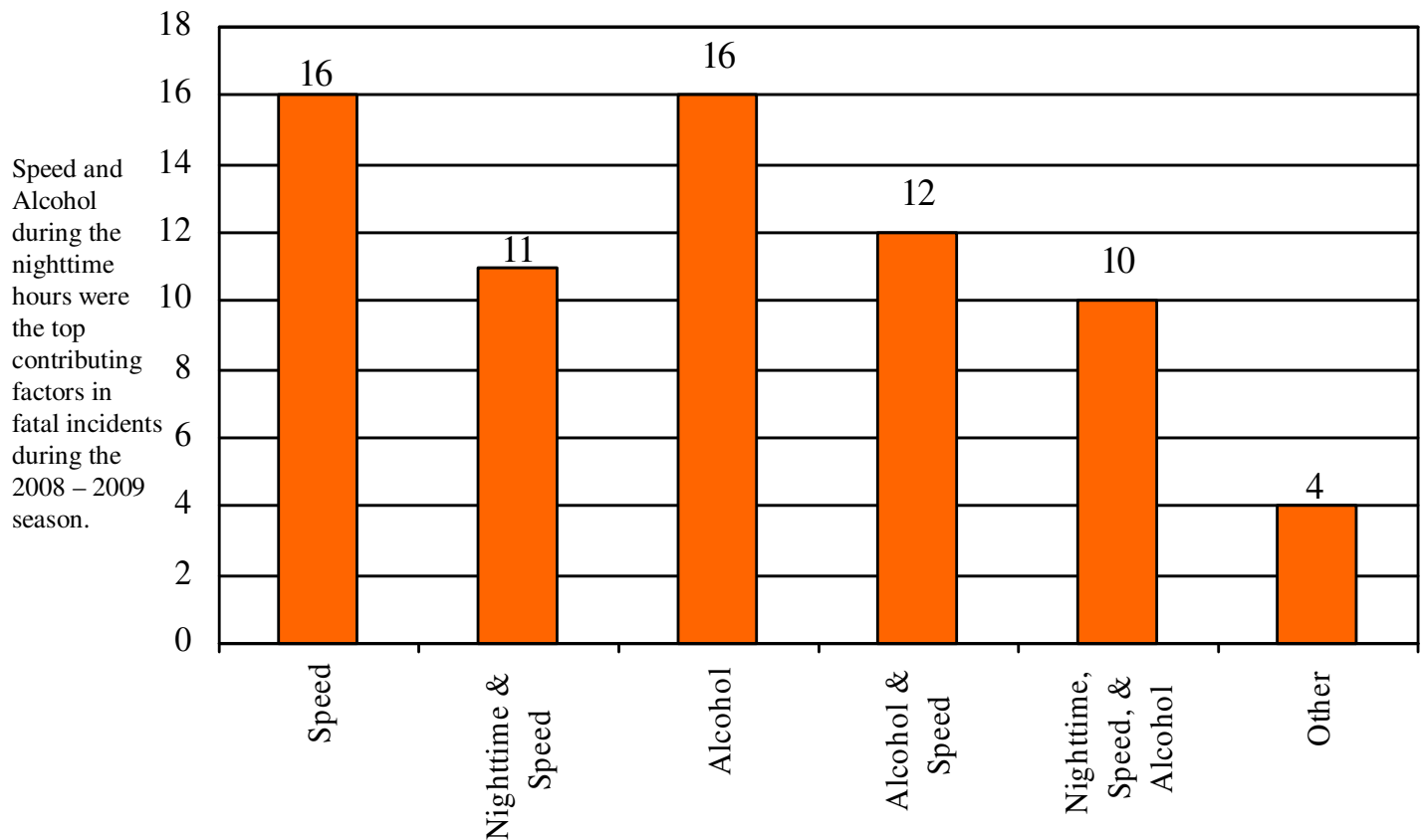
2008-2009 Fatal Snowmobile Incidents Speed and Location at Time of Incident



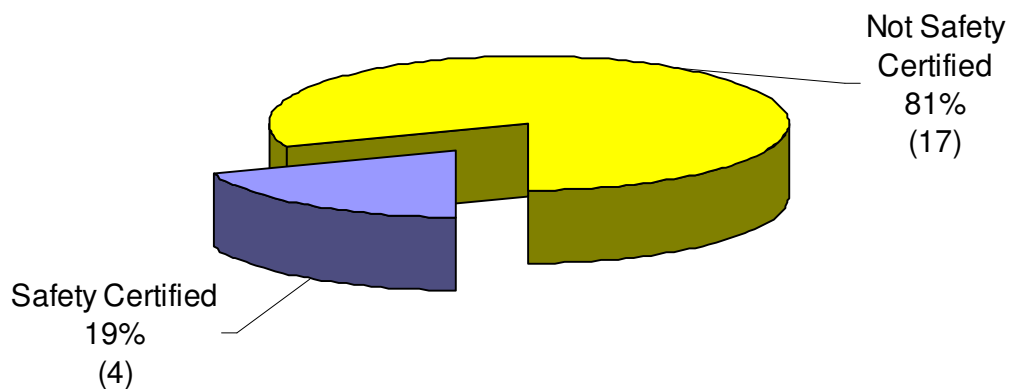
2008-2009 Fatal Snowmobile Incidents Type



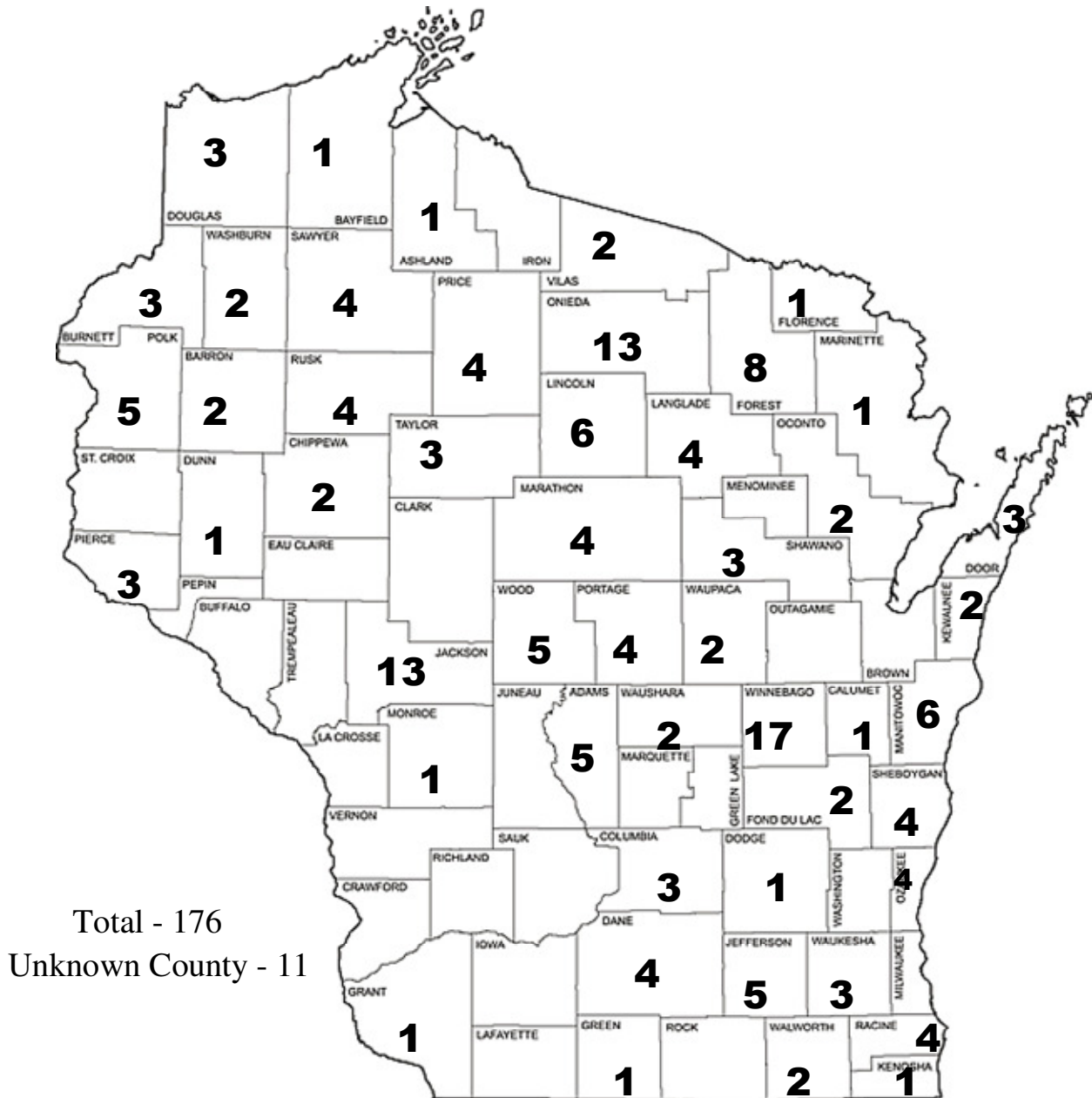
2008-2009 Main Factors Involved in Fatal Snowmobile Incidents



2008-2009 Fatal Snowmobile Victim Operators with Wisconsin DNR Safety Training Certification



Total Snowmobile Injury Incidents Reported to Law Enforcement – 2008-2009



Wisconsin law requires each snowmobile operator involved in an snowmobile accident (that results in the death of any person or the injury of any person requiring medical treatment) to immediately notify a law enforcement officer, complete a DNR accident report and file that report with the DNR within 10 days after the accident.

2008-2009 Citations Issued for Snowmobile Violations

Total Citations.....	871
Operate Snowmobile w/o Valid Registration (S-1)	131
Highway and Roadway Violations (S-12)	55
Fail to or Improper Display of Registration Number or Decal (S-2)	47
Operate w/o Trail Use Sticker (S-33).....	63
Fail to Comply with Regulatory Signs (S-35).....	181
Operate Snowmobile w/o Possession of Valid Certificate (S-3)	35
Operate at/in Unreasonable, Improper or Careless Speed/manner (S-17)	36
Trespass 'Sec. 350.10(6) through (13) Wis. Stats.' (S-19)	23
Operate Snowmobile that Makes Excessive or Unusual Noise (S-28)	7
Operate Snowmobile while Intoxicated (S-24).....	43
Operate in Prohibited Area on Lands Controlled by DNR (S-11)	3
Give Permission to Operate a Snowmobile not Registered (S-5)	21
Permit Operation by Person Incapable Because of Age, Physical or Mental Disability (S-15).....	26
Operate Snowmobile with Alcohol Concentration Above .1% (S-25)	33
Fail to Transfer Registration of Snowmobile (S-4).....	18
Operate snowmobile w/o proof of training certificate (S-36)	78
Operate (Manufacture or Seller) Snowmobile w/o Functioning Muffler (S-34)	3
Transport Uncased Strung Bow on a Snowmobile (S-09)	1
Fail to Report Snowmobile Accident (S-16).....	4
Fail to Display Lights when Required (S-18)	1
Miscellaneous (S-20)	1
Fail to Stop for Law Enforcement Officer (S-22).....	
Operate Snowmobile w/o Muffler on Engine (S-29)	2
Shoot From a Snowmobile (S-10).....	1
Equipment Violation (S-14).....	
Dealer Failing to Collect Fee & Submit Registration Applications (S-21).....	
Refuse to Take Intoxicated Snowmobile Test (S-26)	9
Absolute Sobriety for Persons Under 19 (S-27)	1
Fail to Render Aid (S-23).....	
Cause Injury by Intoxicated Operation of Snowmobile (S-30).....	
Operate snowmobile on or adjacent to a roadway in excess of the applicable Speed limit (S-27)	
Fail to keep to the right and proceed with caution when passing another Snowmobile in the opposite direction (S-38).....	4
Operate snowmobile > 55 mph during hours of darkness (S-55)	38
Driving animals with a snowmobile (S-07)	
Selling snowmobiles without dealers license (S-13).....	
Failure to advise/notify of change of address (S-06)	
Transport loaded or uncased firearm on a snowmobile (S-08)	
Remove or damage snowmobile trail signs & standards (S-32)	
Operate snowmobile on or adjacent to a roadway in excess of the applicable speed limit (S-37)	6

Citations received and entered into database as of 09/01/2009.

Wisconsin Snowmobile Fatality Summary 2008/2009 Season

#	Date/Time	Location	Type & Cause of Incident / Fatality	Age / Sex	BAC / Residency	WI Safety Certified / Helmet
1.	12/09/08	Barron County	Drove through thin ice on lake	50	0.0	No
	6:00PM	Village of Haugen (Lake)	Unsafe Ice	M	WI	No

The victim's wife reported her husband missing after she was unable to make contact with him and his whereabouts were unknown. Officers followed fresh snowmobile tracks on the lake leading onto an area of thin ice with no apparent exit tracks. Divers from local rescue teams recovered the victim in 15 feet of water directly beneath an open hole at the end of the snowmobile track.

2.	12/18/08	Adams County	Struck trees	56	.270	No
	7pm - 7am	Jackson Township (Road/Route)	Speed/Alcohol/Head Trauma	M	WI	Yes

The victim failed to negotiate a curve leaving the roadway, hitting a brush pile, going air born then striking a tree causing the snowmobile to come to a stop, the operator struck that tree and continued 27 feet hitting a second tree. Victim was last seen leaving a tavern at around 7pm.

3.	12/22/08	Jefferson County	Struck Fixed Object	32	.171	Yes
	9:55 PM	Concord Township (Trail)	Speed/Alcohol/Head Trauma	M	WI	Yes

The victim was third in a line of three snowmobiles when the first two riders crested a hill and entered a wooded tree line. The victim failed to negotiate the opening in the tree line, left the marked trail and struck a tree head on.

4.	12/25/08	Dane County	Collision with moving vehicle	44	.000	No
	4:08 PM	Town of Windsor (Trail)	Failure to yield/Head and Chest Injuries	M	WI	Yes

The victim entered roadway failing to yield right-of-way to semi-milk truck. Milk truck operator attempted to stop and went off road right. Victim jumped from sled and was struck by milk truck.

5.	12/30/08	Town of Eldorado	Collision With a Fixed Object	16	.000	No
	7:10 PM	Fond du Lac County (Private Property)	Speed/Visibility	M	WI	Yes

The victim was operating across a field on private property when he crossed a stream ditch at approximately 50 mph and hit a piece of frozen ground along a plowed field. The snowmobile went airborne and the victim was found a few feet from the machine; his helmet was no longer on. The victim passed away at the scene.

6.	12/31/08	Town of Herman	Struck by Snowmobile	55	.198	No
	6:45 PM	Shawano County (Public Trail)	Speed/Alcohol	M	WI	Yes

The victim was first in a line of three snowmobiles operating at a high rate of speed when he struck and killed a deer. The second and third snowmobiles could not stop in time and were involved in a collision together. One of the snowmobiles struck the victim who passed away at the scene. The second snowmobiler was air lifted to a hospital and the third snowmobiler was arrested for operating while intoxicated. All three snowmobilers had just left an area tavern.

7.	01/01/09	Town of Oakland	Collision With Fixed Object	20	.186	No
	11:50 PM	Douglas County (Frozen Lake)	Speed/Alcohol/Drugs	M	MN	Yes

The victim operating across a lake at a very high rate of speed with a passenger when the snowmobile hit the shoreline went airborne and struck a dock that had been pulled onto shore. Both the operator and passenger were killed instantly. The operator was wearing a helmet, but the passenger was not. The victim operator also tested positive for marijuana (THC).

8.	01/01/09	Town of Oakland	Collision With Fixed Object	21	.147	N/A
	11:50 PM	Douglas County (Frozen Lake)	Speed/Alcohol/Drugs	F	MN	No

See fatal #7. Victim #8 was the passenger. The victim operator also tested positive for marijuana (THC).

9.	01/03/09	Town of Little Falls	Collision With tree	38	0.231	No
	1:26 AM	Monroe County (Trail)	Speed/Alcohol/Massive Chest & Abdominal Trauma	M	IL	Yes

The victim was traveling at a high rate of speed, lost control and struck a tree ejecting him from the snowmobile.

10.	01/03/09	Town of Elk	Collision With another snowmobile	65	0.0	No
	2:00 PM	Price County (Trail)	Visibility/fail to stay to right/Massive Head, Neck & Chest Trauma	M	WI	Yes

Two snowmobiles collided with each other at the crest of a hill.

11.	01/03/09	Town of Arbor Vitae	Collision with another snowmobile	26	.000	No
	9:50 AM	Vilas County (Route)	Speed/Fail to stay to the right/Head injuries	F	WI	Yes

Victims #11 and #12 were riding double on a snowmobile and were involved in a near head-on collision with victim #13. Victim #13 was found to have marijuana with him at the time of the crash. The victim's blood also tested positive for marijuana.

12.	01/03/09	Town of Arbor Vitae	Collision with another snowmobile	26	.000	No
	9:50 AM	Vilas County (Route)	Speed/Fail to stay to the right/Head and Chest Injuries	M	WI	Yes

See #11.

13.	01/03/09	Town of Arbor Vitae	Collision with another snowmobile	39	.000	No
	9:50 AM	Vilas County (Route)	Speed/Fail to stay to the right/Drugs	M	IL	Yes

See #11.

14.	01/24/09	Town of Grover	Collision with Fixed Object	73	.084	No
	3:19 PM	Marinette County (Public Road)	Speed/Multiple Internal Injuries/Alcohol	M	WI	Yes

Victim was found deceased on a dead end road. Victim lost control on the road, rolled the snowmobile near the edge and was ejected into a group of trees. The road was not open for legal snowmobile travel.

15.	01/25/09	Town of Holland	Collision with Fixed Object	44	0.36	No
	5:49 PM	LaCrosse County (Snowmobile Trail)	Alcohol/Fail to Negotiate Curve/Blunt Force Trauma	M	WI	Yes

Victim was operating on a snowmobile trail, failed to negotiate a curve, and struck a tree.

16.	01/27/09	Town of Hay River	Ejection/Collision with Fixed Object	46	.159	No
	10:00 PM	Dunn County (Snowmobile Trail)	Fail to Negotiate Curve/Chest & Neck Injuries/Alcohol	M	WI	Yes

The victim was operating on a snowmobile trail, failed to negotiate a curve and was ejected from the snowmobile, striking a tree.

17.	02/01/09	Town of Columbus	Struck by Motor Vehicle	38	0.052	Yes
	6:18 PM	Columbia County (Snowmobile Trail Crossing)	Failure to Yield Right of Way/Alcohol	M	WI	Yes

The victim was the second snowmobiler in a group of two when he failed to yield to a motor vehicle while crossing State Highway 60 and was struck and killed by a motor vehicle.

18.	02/05/2009	Town of Nasewaupee	Collision with Fixed Object	40	0.10	No
	9:20 PM	Door County (Snowmobile Trail)	Speed/Alcohol	M	MI	Yes

The victim was third snowmobile in a group of three when he passed his two companions. The victim lost control traveling off the trail, back on and then proceeded straight off a curve into a tree. The victim's companions performed CPR, but the victim succumbed to his injuries.

19.	02/07/2009	Town of Anson	Collision with Fixed Object	55	0.278	No
	3:27 PM	Chippewa County (Snowmobile Trail)	Speed/Alcohol	M	MI	Yes

The victim was lead snowmobile in a group of eight. The victim was traveling ahead of the group and was out of sight of the 2nd rider when he went off the trail on a curve and collided with a tree.

20.	02/14/2009	Town of Pensaukee	Collision with Fixed Object	48	0.198	No
	9:29 PM	Oconto County (Lake)	Speed/Alcohol	M	WI	Yes

The victim had left a tavern and was traveling on Green Bay when the victim hit an ice heave. The victim's snowmobile went airborne for approximately 57 feet before impacting the ice. The victim went airborne for approximately 149 feet before impacting the ice, where the victim continued for approximately another 150 feet. The victim's snowmobile was found with the engine still running.

21.	02/21/2009	Town of Watertown	Drowning	34	0.266	No
	9:29 PM	Jefferson County (River)	Poor Ice Conditions/Alcohol	M	WI	Yes

The victim was at an event along the Rock River and left for his residence downstream. When the victim didn't arrive at his residence, family members searched for him; observing the victim's snowmobile helmet floating in the river. The Sheriff's Dept. pulled the victim from the water at 5:30a.m. the next morning.

22.	02/27/2009	Town of Mt. Morris	Collision with Fixed Object	52	0.304	Yes
	12:30 AM	Waushara County (Lake)	Speed/Alcohol	M	WI	Yes

The victim left a tavern and traveled home. Once at home the victim started a different snowmobile and traveled out onto a lake. Victim was reported missing the next morning and was found along the shoreline. Victim appeared to have struck the shoreline with his snowmobile, ejected and struck two boats stored up on shore. A witness stated that the victim appeared intoxicated prior to leaving for his home.

23.	02/28/2009	Town of Stephenson	Collision with Fixed Object	44	0.163	Yes
	2:00 AM	Marinette County (Trail)	Speed/Alcohol	M	IL	No

The victim and companions left a tavern and were heading to their cabin. The victim was third in a line of four snowmobiles when he attempted to pass the snowmobile ahead of him, lost control and collided with a tree on the left side of the trail. Victim was ejected and landed onto the trail. Victim's companions initiated CPR until EMS

Complete a Snowmobile Safety Course

Learn more at WWW.DNR.WI.GOV



Remember to always wear your helmet.

If not for yourself, do it for your family and friends.

Ride for Life